The Commonweal
December 17, 1948

An American Speaks to Germans

Dorothy Thompson

Storm on the Air Waves

James Rorty

VOLUME XLIX 15c NUMBER 10

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COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLIX December 17, 1948 NUMBER 10

THE WEEK 243
AN AMERICAN SPEAKS TO GERMANS *Dorothy Thompson* 246
STORM ON THE AIR WAVES *James Rorty* 250
ADVENT: IN MARY-DARKNESS (*Verse*) *Jessica Powers* 253
CHANGING THE WORLD *Edward S. Skillin* 253
COMMUNICATIONS 254
Christian Industrialism?—For the Record—Christmas Appeal
THE LABOR MOVEMENT *John C. Cort* 257
THE STAGE *Kappo Phelan* 258
THE SCREEN *Philip T. Hartung* 259
BOOKS 260
The Rape of Poland—The War We Lost—The Struggle Behind the Iron Curtain—The Northerner—The Collected Poems of John Peale Bishop—The Collected Essays of John Peale Bishop—America in Perspective—The Mexico We Found

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Berlin Elections and Decisions

WHEN an election really settles issues, for a country or state or city, that is news indeed: wonderful news that conditions are truly and fundamentally fine! The Berlin election settled very little. It was a splendid and courageous show that the Berliners put on. They accomplished the maximum job that the circumstances of the city permitted. We certainly can rejoice in the victory, and rejoice in honoring those tough Berlin citizens, but we must also consider how much we must also associate ourselves in the problems and issues which were not settled in their ballot box.

A unified election for the Berlin government had been sabotaged by the Russians, who did not allow their sector of the city to vote. Instead, they set up. by communist revolutionary fiat, an illegal rump government in their Berlin sector, claiming jurisdiction over the whole city. But, significantly, the Russians entered the campaign for the West Berlin elections with all their little hearts. They fought with the propaganda and political and economic and police pressure they could develop. They could not provide a 100 percent communist-democratic-type election of the one-party-hurrah variety (as they do further East) because there were Englishmen and Frenchmen and Americans still cluttering the West Berlin landscape. The Russians campaigned for abstention from the election. Supporters of the Soviet were to stay away from the polls. The total number of citizens eligible to vote in the election was 1,500,000. Of this total, 86.2 percent cast their ballots—every vote cast, by the Russian and German and Allied definition, being a vote against Soviet Communism. The Social Democrats won 64.5 percent of the votes; the Christian Democrats 19.9 percent; the Liberal Democrats 16.1 percent. It was a tremendous, courageous and clearly defined repudiation of Communism and the Soviets.

The winners in West Berlin met quickly after their acclamation for a conference on plans and operations. They announced that the blockaded city requires at least 8,000 tons of material sent in daily, to keep going. Eight thousand tons is toward twice the present air lift. The broad military and economic and international problem was by no means solved by the election.

The strike weapon has been unlimbered in the Berlin crisis. Anti-communists used it to prevent the Russians from keeping some workers from the polls. Since the election, the utility union in *"Bewag,"* the great electric-light and power combine, has used it in the Russian zone of the city to force the Reds to release and return kidnapped fellow workers and to reduce police espionage and pressure. The status of the unions, which are enormous social powers in the present Western countries, has not been settled by the election.

The question of power and control is left almost wide open. Primarily, the elections settled a question of preference, and secondarily, of form and theory. Berlin will not go Russian or communist by choice, and not by the forms and means of freedom and democracy and law. The Berliners are not in a position to decide whether or not they and their city shall go Soviet in eventual, practical fact. But there, the Allies must realize, is where we came in.

Freedom in China

AT THE airport in Washington, Madame Chiang Kai-shek received a welcome that, in elegant society parlors, might be called "a slow freeze." Right now, this cool treatment is the fashionable attitude to take toward Chiang and the Nationalist Government; and, of course, the most fashionable people in town taking the pose are, as usual, the "liberals," the common-man apostles of the new dawn, who tell us that the thing to do now about China is to sit back and let the communists roll in. The Nationalist cause

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is hopeless. The cry is: no deal with the reactionary Chiang!

Now if anyone fails to take up this cry, the implication is plain: he is a reactionary fuddy-duddy who is supporting the corrupt politics and stupid military tactics of the Chiang government. He is a friend of the rich, an enemy of the poor, and a betrayer of social progress for the "new masses" of China. Is such an implication merited?

The fact of the matter is that our government, by act of Congress, is on record to support the Nationalists, and in the last three years we have given them nearly two billion dollars. During that time, we have been aware that the Nationalist Government needs reform, that its currency needs stabilizing, and that the Chinese people have a right to social advancement. At this late hour, our money has not bought all these reforms for China, and today the military position of Chiang is indeed next to disaster. Perhaps no immediate aid of any sort will save the government, and only long-range plans will be effective.

In the long view, it is rather naïve to write off the Nationalists: the Chinese, during the war with Japan, turned the maneuver of strategic retreat into eventual victory. If the United States decides now to back up such a retrenchment with more billions of dollars, why is it not possible to impose conditions upon the granting of this money, conditions which will guarantee that the money be spent under supervision: if such supervision would be "intervention" in Chinese affairs, why is not ERP, which has similar provisions, condemned as intervention in Europe? We would be responsible to see that the Nationalists cleaned house, we could press *in fact* for the high-minded reforms we say we want for the Chinese people, we could see that food and relief were properly administered, we would stabilize the only working resistance to communism in China.

The alternative to this policy is to give up the Nationalists and accept a communist China. But how is it possible to reconcile a pro-communist China policy with our European Recovery program—how does it make sense to spend billions reconstructing free, non-communist Europe and at the very same time sit down and watch totalitarian forces beat down the back door in Asia? Why should we lament totalitarian advances in Germany, Czechoslovakia, or in France, and not in China? Or can it be that we are not completely disabused of the fable that communism in China is strictly a nice, local, independent reform movement unrelated to Kremlin tactics?

It may not be possible to pour big money into China immediately; we may not like everything about the Chiang régime. But these are secondary matters to be worked out in time: our overall, global strategy should be clear by this time, and there is no reason to abandon that strategy in Asia. If this is not "fashionable" liberalism at the moment, it may at least have the merit of being consistent foreign policy, as well as the least disillusioning road to freedom in China.

Grass Roots and the Great Plains

IT IS probably not sufficiently appreciated that purchases from our farm areas have had much to do with America's surprisingly sustained level of prosperity. For several years in a row farmers have had good money in their pockets, and although they are not yet able to spend with the lavishness of their city cousins, they are buying more home improvements, clothes, electrical appliances and other things than they ever have before. Iowa families that keep accounts, for instance, are for the first time spending more for medical care than the average American city family. That primary producers should at last be so rewarded is poetic justice.

Another element in the picture is that American grain exports this crop year, financed largely by government purchases, may reach a record 700,000,000 bushels, or fourteen times the prewar average. Yet a tremendous carry-over is in prospect notwithstanding renewed activity of the corn-borer in Nebraska and other states. The decline in food prices (the only item in the cost-of-living index which does not continue to rise) underlines the slackening in demand, which will inevitably be catastrophic when the rest of the world's food producers get back in stride.

So, in casting about for means of continuing this happy state of things, two South Dakota businessmen and the long-time editor of the Mitchell, S. D., *Daily Republic,* buoyed up by their rôle in swinging the election, are already agitating in Washington for their new farm bill —the result of thirty months of conferences in eight states.

Leading provisions include the maintenance of present 90 percent parity prices; the supplying of badly needed new storage facilities for grain which is to be fed to local livestock; a two-price system whereby a certain portion of each farmer's yield, required by domestic consumers, would enjoy parity support while the rest would be taken up at lower prices for domestic stamp-plan relief and for export.

On the face of it the outlines of the plan are not nearly as worrisome as the reported sentiments of one of the two sponsors, Al Barnes, a Huron, S. D., farm-implement dealer: "If the wheat farmer gets less per bushel, all he can do is grow more wheat. If he's bought a $5,500 combine, do you think he's going to shift to soy beans?" In other words, our basic farm legislation should be drawn up on the basis of the way dry-farming is now conducted on the Great Plains.

That the Department of Agriculture, even for

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immediate plantings, now believes in shifts to other crops is strikingly indicated in its suggested "production goals" for 1949, which call, among other things, for sharp increases in acreages devoted to légumes and grasses.

Contradictory Country

THE text of the Genocide Convention adopted by the legal committee of the UN was published in New York on the morning of December 2nd. Genocide means, the UN defines: acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, racial, or religious group, as such. The outlawing of genocide therein proposed, includes killing members of a group, doing serious bodily or mental harm to a group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, and forcibly transferring children of that group to another group.

On the same day, the Phi Kappa Psi alumni association of Johnstown, Penna., forwarded a resolution to the fraternity's executive council that not only Negroes but also "adherents of all Semitic creeds" should be banned from membership in the fraternity. This resolution followed upon the Amherst chapter of the fraternity having admitted a Negro. On the same day, the New York Public Library appealed for a fund of $10,000,000. After a hundred years of being maintained entirely by private funds, the library is asking the city to take over many of its enterprises. Still on the same day it was announced that New York City alone is asking $25,000,000 for the expansion of the city's four colleges; while all over the country, vast sums are being urged for the rehabilitation of teachers and the expansion of education.

It would seem perhaps a pity for a country to spend so much public money on colleges, when the ablest students profit so little as deliberately to commit genocide on the only scale upon which they are able to do so—on the social scale. It would seem, too, a pity that so splendidly liberal and humane an institution as the New York Public Library, after a century of essentially humanist research and service, should be obliged to appeal to the city. For there are pressure groups within that city which, in the words of the genocide convention, purpose to cause mental harm to religious groups, as such. There is a similarity of intention, at least, in the avowed determination of the Phi Kappa Psi alumni association to ban adherents of all Semitic creeds, and those who would forbid the use of released time for the study of their faith, to the school-aged children of such adherents.

An immediate flooding of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternities throughout the United States by members of the non-Semitic creeds (Buddhist, Hindu, and Animist are the only considerable three, for Confucianism and Shintoism hardly rank as creeds—the former is a philosophy, the latter a form of patriotism) is hardly to be expected, though this may be a cause of sad disappointment to the fraternity members. The disappearance of believers from United States schools is also not likely to be sudden or immediate, for the recent New York State decision, in spite of Mr. Arthur Hays's protests, has upset the considerable victory of Vashti at Champaign.

It would seem that there must exist a certain amount of confusion in a country which can simultaneously approve the genocide pact, and approve the banning, by groups of its young people, of the creeds of Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, as well as of the whole Negro race. If genocide is to be forbidden internationally, is there no way to make it illegal nationally? Or at least to ostracize its perpetrators? If we are spending millions upon millions educating our young people, could not some of them be persuaded to use the research facilities of our splendid libraries sufficiently to learn which *are* the Semitic creeds? And also on what, if on anything, they base their assumption of the physical, moral, cultural or spiritual inferiority of the Negro race?

Brussels or Rio Formula?

IN THE negotiations still in the preliminary stage of drawing up the proposed Western Defense Pact between France, England and the Benelux countries and the United States and Canada, the extent of each signatory's commitment is the chief matter in dispute. In the absence of an effective international police force the choices narrow down to two: the Brussels Pact concluded by the five Western European nations calls for "all military and other aid and assistance" in the event of armed attack upon any signatory; the Inter-American Defense Pact concluded at Rio de Janeiro last year and in effect December 3rd of this, while stating that an attack upon one is an attack upon all, also provides that "no state shall be required to use armed force without its consent." Washington observers agree that American negotiators favor the latter type of commitment, with immediate joint consultation and permission to act in case of an attack. Canada is said to be like-minded. And according to our Constitution, only Congress has the power to declare war. All these are formidable obstacles. But no defense pact worthy of the name in present circumstances can rest on such slender reeds as mutual consultation and deployment of limited armed forces. There must be no question about the nature of the deterrent designed to hold back a major aggressor.

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An American Speaks to Germans

Dorothy Thompson

THE War Department of the United States has invited me to write this article,* and address, in this manner, the German people.

Although feeling deeply the responsibility involved in any words that I, as a private American citizen and publicist may speak, I welcome this invitation as a sign of our government's openness of mind, and its support for freedom of speech. If the latter has not yet been achieved for all Germans—and I cannot conceive how, under conditions of military occupation, it can be wholly achieved—it is at least important for Germans that Americans may still speak their mind, entirely freely, and even in a publication of the military government, on the German question.

The War and State Departments know that I have been by no means a servile supporter of our government's German policy. Although I believed it essential for the preservation of civilization that Hitler should be decisively defeated in the war that the German State, under his leadership, started, I believed, and wrote, that the peace terms should have been defined in advance; that they should have left Germany her borders as of 1937; that the Atlantic Charter should have continued to furnish the code for the victors; and that we should have given every aid and encouragement, including the promise of German integrity, to the anti-Nazi forces in the German underground. I believed, and predicted, furthermore, that the division of Germany under four conquerors of profoundly differing interests and ideologies would inevitably end, as it has, in a struggle between them. I have criticized the denazification procedures, as suppressing one of the most basic concepts of peace—the idea of amnesty—and held that only persons guilty of positive crimes should have been prosecuted. I did not concede that officers, whose professional premise is to eschew politics and serve blindly the government which calls them into service—the premise of the soldiery in every country in the world—should be prosecuted as war criminals. And I have felt, and written in my own country, that there is no justice in accusing any Germans of crimes against humanity, such as slave labor, and deportation of populations, as long as the same crimes continue to be committed by some of the nations who sit in judgment. So deeply as I hated Naziism, and hated it from the moment it put in its appearance, predicting also, from that moment, the ruin it would bring to Germany and Europe, so deeply have I striven to oppose every measure that carries within itself, under whatever name, the seeds of that curse, which is the curse of arbitrary rule, violence, persecution, and, as a logical result, war.

I say these things at the outset of this article, only that you should know who it is that the War Department invites to write to you. I take it as a good omen that I am so invited.

For times are changing, and we with them. The relation between victor and vanquished is not so remote and so opposite as men, in the heat of war, and in fury at atrocious crimes, see it to be. The crimes committed by Germany's government were of unexampled horror, unique in the history of Western Christian civilization. I do not think it wise, or just, that this should be forgotten. They account for an almost universal feeling, growing during the war and afterward, when the facts about these crimes became patently revealed, that there was practically no punishment which justice did not demand. Yet I found and find it of the deepest significance that these crimes were also unique to *Germany*. In the long history of the German people, who have so often suffered injustice from other nations—as all nations have suffered injustices in the course of their historical development—the record of Germany has not compared unfavorably with that of other peoples. As Fritz von Unruh put it, they also have been "in grace." Must one not, therefore, hope and believe, that it was the fifteen years of unexampled despotism, terror, and madness that were *unrepresentative* of the German people? Must one not have faith that the Germany which lives and will live, is the Germany of Christianity, equity, social conscience, lofty idealism, creative energy, and human love? And if we do not have that faith, and if we are unable to nourish the great virtues of the German character, which have so often manifested themselves in history, that they may revive and re-create themselves in even nobler forms, is not the prospect one of despair for all of us, and especially, for that western civilization of which Germany, through the centuries, has been so integral a part?

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* First published in *Die Amerikanische Rundschau*, this article is printed here by permission of the War Department. Next week, Dorothy Thompson will present her analysis of German letters responding to this article.

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Never so deeply in my life, as during the war and this post-war time, have I gone back to the things I was taught by my Christian clergyman father, and learned from the gospels which were part of our daily fare. *Why* are we actually compelled to love our enemies? We are compelled to seek reconciliation with them because only in reconciliation is there peace. Reconciliation does not mean to put out of mind the evils that have been committed, but rather to seek an understanding of *why* they were committed; to probe into understanding not only by searching the souls of others—the enemies—but by searching our own; to ask ourselves with the utmost honesty how much of Hitlerism is in ourselves and all our societies, and to consider how we all, together, victor and vanquished, learning from the sufferings we all, to greater or less degree, endured, can turn from error to truth, and through truth to mutual atonement. Only then, when we each openly confess our sins, individually or collectively committed, of omission, as well as commission, can we forgive each other, be forgiven by God, and be cleansed into new, creative, life. Thus the problem of victor and vanquished is always the problem of finding a fresh basis from which to begin together a new life in cooperation and peace. Otherwise the victor opppresses the vanquished to become the image of the thing against which he took up arms; or the vanquished press upon the victor a crushing burden, pulling him down with them into mutual physical and moral despair. Many Germans know exactly what I mean, for they, too, were briefly conquerors, and many suffered from the wretchedness of their own victory, learning in Poland, and Holland, and Norway and France, the bitterness of a victory that wins only hatred and contempt, and the burden of a victory that can only be sustained by perpetual force, tying the victor in the most intimate common bondage with the conquered.

The mansion of Germany fell away from Europe during the Hitler régime. That was your disaster and ours. It must be re-built and restored or the bell will toll for all the children of Europe and of the new world.

*

What is it, practically, that must be restored—for Germany and for all of us? What is the western civilization of which we speak so often these days? What has contributed, apart from the Hitlerian revolt, to bring us all, and in particular Europe, to such a low estate?

It seems to me that Germany in particular and all of us in general, have been suffering in this century from acceptance of several heresies: the heresy of nationalism as a substitute for culture; the heresy of science as a guide to conduct; the heresy of organization as a guarantee of security; the heresy of economics as ascendant over politics; and, in our times, the heresy of "One World." All these have served to undermine the pillars of our societies and reached their apogee, in the life of the west, in National Socialist Germany.

Nationalism, in that it affirms the fact of nations, is as natural as the family is natural. Consanguinity, common language, established habits of life, are historical and cultural realities. No one can travel among nations without observing and even praising, the differences among them. The Frenchman neither plants his fields nor plans his villages as do the Germans; the terrain and climate of Holland create a different picture from that of Belgium; the Italian landscape is not the Austrian, nor is the Italian mind. And out of consanguinity, language, and habits of life grow special affinities and loyalties which are as natural as the special affinities between kindred.

Nevertheless, since the French Revolution, nationalism has served to erase other affinities no less compelling. There are affinities arising from a community of religion, which transcends all frontiers. Wherever the Christian cross stands above a roof tree, every Christian has a home, and if he be a Roman Catholic, he enters a church and participates in a ritual which is identical from Rome to Patagonia. There is the affinity of art, which makes a Rembrandt or a Raphael, a Picasso or a Dix, a Bamberg or Mont Saint Michel, Thornton Wilder or André Gide, Arthur Koestler or Ernst Juenger—to take random names—*comprehensible* throughout the huge area of a culture.

There is the affinity of common political tradition and standards of justice. The political tradition of the west, from ancient Greece to modern San Francisco, through monarchy and republics, to a greater degree here than there, and in this time than that, is of Liberty under Law. Never, in the history of the West, since the dawn of Christianity and before it, in the Athens of Pericles, the Rome of the Republic and the Caesars, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, into modern times, has there ever been a régime except Hitler's that was not to some degree a "Rechtsstaat," and did not protect for the citizen certain rights and liberties, however limited, natural or "wohlerworben," or fail to establish courts before which he could seek equity according to a known and established code. The story of Frederick the Great and the Miller, which used to be in every German primer and may be still for all I know, is a story perfectly comprehensible to any Frenchman, Briton, or American.

Nationalism which disregards these, and many other cultural affinities, turns natural friends and allies into wholly unnatural enemies. The enmities within Europe are the more unnatural

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because a thousand affinities make Europeans if not into blood kindred, into members of a common culture.

Therefore if we are to live in a natural world, national states must limit themselves to take account of cultural affinities, and to cultivate these rather than destroy them. The growth of European nationalism, elevating the nation-state into the sole repository of all loyalties and affinities, is against the great cultural fact that all Europe and America rest on common assumptions concerning what is a fit society for man. Our civilization has never rested on naked force, except for brief and horrible periods. It has always assumed that the end of the state and society is to further the creative development of the human person and bind him in free association in a dignified society. Tyranny has been alien to its spirit since the days of Socrates, and despotism intolerable. Unless we all fall to the dull level of the clod, we are the heirs of remembered experience differing in some particulars from the experience of others; differing profoundly, for instance, from the experience of Russia, which knew neither Athens nor Rome, nor the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Eighteenth Century middle-class revolutions, nor the free proletarian associations and advancements of the last two centuries of the West. For Europe to pass under the control of Russia, whether the Russia of the Soviets or any other Russia, would be a catastrophe of immeasurable proportions, because it would be a rule even more alien from natural and inherited affinities than would be the rule of Europe by the United States, which God forbids, and the American people will reject.

But European nationalisms have contributed to the present chaos, and Europe's future—whereever its spiritual boundaries may be drawn—depends, to my mind, on the emergence of a European confederation which will express the European spirit of unity and diversity and lead to a re-birth of the European genius. It is impossible to conceive of such a united Europe without Germany, nor to imagine a European re-birth except as Germany is permitted to enter into such a community in full equity, enabling Europe to profit from the pooled efforts of all her free and equal men.

There is no question in my mind that most thoughtful Americans look forward to this solution of the German and European problem. The charges that are ignorantly made against the United States, that it seeks world domination, take no account of the American character, nor of the fact that since we are a democracy in which the state is compelled to be continually responsive to the people, that character is determinant of policy. America is as large as it wants to be, and as large as it can afford to be and keep free. What we seek is a world equilibrium which will enable us once again to mind our own business in security and peace, and hold intercourse with the rest of the world on equal terms. We know that the condition for this is the establishment of security for all nations and cultures; the expansion of natural associations; the restraint of unnatural expansions; and the restoration of Europe as a vital living organism within the historic European domain. And this is all that lies behind the Marshall Plan, for which the American people have made and will make very great sacrifices.

★

Today Germany is radically divided between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union, by a chain of actions unforeseen by the United States. It was no part of American policy at any time that this division should be more than a temporary occupation *modus vivendi*. It was no part of American policy at any time that ancient European states should be permanently turned into satellites and colonies of any conqueror with the form of their governments determined by a victor and their national leadership installed as Quislings. And though there were Americans whose wrath was so kindled by Hitlerian atrocities as to obliterate all pity for Germany, the American spirit was always far more truly expressed in Franklin D. Roosevelt's warning that "God has not eternally condemned any race of mankind."

How great a grief the division is for Germans I can well understand. Yet, to my mind—and I shall say so frankly—were I a German, and however deep my griefs, I should hold the unity of what is left of Europe to be more important than the restoration of the unity of what was once Germany. To put it this way: I would rather be a citizen of a rump Germany, in a Confederation of Europe, than a citizen of a united Germany in the stranglehold of the Soviet Empire.

For there is often a greater good to be won by the renunciation, or temporary renunciation, of a lesser good. It is good that kindred should be together. Were I a German, I should never be able to accept the thesis that Koenigsberg is a Russian city, or Breslau or Stettin a Polish. Yet territories have often been torn from nations and never restored, and the nation itself has not perished, but passed into new expressions and even wider opportunities. But once a nation falls as a whole under the domination of an essentially alien master, it lives only in futile underground reminiscence, or its genius is bred out of it forever by the thought-control methods of despots. Western Europe, as a whole, can live, if it develops to the fullest its resources, the chief of which are not to be found in the material world, but in the brains, skills, imaginations, and moral

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and spiritual forces of the people.

No one can foresee the ultimate judgments of history. Since I deeply believe that all injustice and all unnatural acts bring their own revenge; since I believe that it is unjust and unnatural that nations or peoples should reap where they have not sown and attach to themselves unwilling subjects, to press them into alien forms, I am convinced that as the wheel of history turns present oppressions will be righted—let us pray, not by new blood baths and new oppressions. For the time being we can take only one step at a time in prayerful meditation that it may be in harmony with just necessity and creative will.

I have felt since the end of World War I, as Romain Rolland felt, that Europe must unite or perish. I do not think Europe will perish, or that having refused the unity which Hitler sought to impose under a brutal Nazi hegemony, she will accept a unity imposed by the Russian knout. No such unity can endure in freedom. Imposed by brute force it must be sustained by brute force. But the unity imposed by defensive necessity and re-orientation of mind can, and I believe will, come into being to bring Europe into new creative and affectionate fellowship.

The bases for all creative activity are freedom, reason, and love. All ideologies which deny these truths of nature and organic life will surely pass away. Science, where reason, to be sure, reigns supreme, and which the modern age has worshipped as the key to life and greatness, will not alone save us, and the greatest of the modern scientists have become more humble men than were their predecessors half a century ago.

Organization, too, can, we have discovered, regiment persons and nations under seemingly perfect blueprints and fail to produce even sufficient bread. The heresy of communism lies in a total misunderstanding of the manifold and unpredictable nature of man, and even of the manifold and unpredictable nature of the cosmos around him. It is, and will increasingly be discovered to be, a very backward and frozen credo, pre-Einstein, pre-Freud (and even pre-Marx), disregarding the most essential facts about human behavior, responses, and reflexes. Man is efficient only when self-propelled to action harmonizing with his will to create, and through his works to love and be loved. Human society is not an "organization," but like man himself, an organism, requiring liberty and love as a plant requires oxygen, for growth. Its greatest achievements are produced often, or seemingly, by chance; almost invariably by the observation of something hitherto unnoticed, or by a re-seeing of things in more correct relations. There are no blueprints which include the unpredicted, unknown, or forgotten. An organic society—which alone deserves the name of a society—flourishes in the spontaneous affectionate relations of persons with each other. Men spontaneously combining for a common purpose naturally organize. But organization to compel men to combine for a purpose outside themselves, and outside their conscious or unconscious affinities and desires, is a reversal of natural process and must end in frustration and stagnation.

As an American I am opposed, therefore, to the dogmatic application of any social, economic, or political system upon Europe, believing that systems which do not grow organically out of the instincts, needs, thoughts, desires, and traditions of the people themselves cannot endure, or create human happiness. The processes of growth are such that what is one man's meat is another man's poison, and what serves one society in one place and one time cannot be imposed upon another, in another place, and another time. American democracy was the response to challenge of Europeans displaced to a continental wilderness and cut loose from many ancient ties to try a new way of life adequate to the necessities of their environment. I do not believe it can be slavishly imposed upon others, living under other circumstances. Yet its roots, which it inherited from European civilization, indicate a common spiritual kinship, for they are the roots of humanism and freedom.

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There are many conceivable forms of economic order. They grow or wither according to the spiritual and political climate in which they live. Of all forms of economic order, communism, it seems to me, requires the highest degree of affectionate fellowship. It is, for instance, the economic order which prevails within loving families, where, in truth, each serves according to his capacities and receives according to his needs. And it is this, which produces within the family the sense of security, physical and spiritual, and hence creates happiness.

But there is another form of communism which is expressed by the prison. Here, too, all is equally shared. The state is the keeper of the prisoners; all are guaranteed the "right to work," and are also guaranteed their sustenance, according to whatever standard the law and the warden may decree. Here, too, is absolute security for the term of the sentence. Yet men saw bars and break locks and risk fearful punishments to free themselves from this inorganic, unwanted, and unaffectionate security!

Communism, creatively to succeed, must be based on affectionate fellowship. But this is beyond the power of the state forcefully to create.

Finally, in our desire to get "One World," or realize any other Utopian dream, we must beware lest we end up with no world at all, destroying in the search for an Order of the Whole the

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Order of any of the parts. There cannot be One World on the pattern of Russia, America, Europe, India, or China unless all nations and peoples are unconditionally to surrender to the bondage of one. We may pray and work for a world in which the ambitions of states are limited to their natural cultural frontiers, and restrained by law in their relations with each other. But unless the relations between states are based on the desire of each to live and let live, and unless the fact of immense human diversity is admitted and welcomed, the quest for One World will end in a global cemetery.

So, at least, it seems to an American looking at Germany and Europe, and feeling the inescapable ties that bind the western world together in a community of destiny, as in a community of culture, for better or worse.

That Germany will live again, and is already beginning to live again, is manifest to me from the communications I receive from German friends, and from such German publications as I receive. It may be that in the inscrutable ways of God, it will be from Germany that will come the revelation and the light that will guide our civilization into happier ways. The rejected stone may yet become the pillar of the temple.

At any rate, to cooperate with truth, and to seek ever-extending fellowship and understanding "with malice toward none" is all that any of us can do in the present chaos, which surely must, in the appointed time, bring a new birth of freedom and good-will, between ourselves, and, let us pray, with all mankind.

Storm on the Air Waves

James Rorty

FOR SIXTEEN years the Jack Benny program has marked the ending of the Sabbath and the beginning of a two-hour secular ritual of gags, boffs, and yaks, in which it is claimed some thirty million Americans have more or less reverently participated. Last week this unique if somewhat frayed American institution seemed seriously endangered.

Benny, it was announced, had moved from NBC to CBS, thereby unloosing a theatrical storm complete with wind machines, Hollywood witches, night club canaries, ventriloquist's dummies, dead cats, booking agents, Treasury Department lawyers and network big shots.

Awed by this Walpurgis Night on the airwaves, the customers may well wonder whether the good ship radio, already lurching from the impact of television, may not eventually founder or at least lose its Dun and Bradstreet rating as Big Business.

True, there have been storms in the broadcasting industry before. Indignant Senators have denounced, educational do-gooders have wailed, the Federal Communications Commission has chided, Blue Books have been published, and the maidenly National Broadcasters' Association has screamed "censorship."

But this is different. This time the black storm clouds are moving from the direction of the Treasury Department in Washington. Within the next two weeks it is expected that the Treasury will have to make an epochal decision upon which may rest the future of the whole radio network structure in the United States. The ultimate control of television is involved. The radio public, now bought and sold over the counter by a tight junta of cigarette, soap, and drug manufacturers may discover who really dictates its entertainment fare.

The first flicker of lightning on the horizon was the Treasury decision accepting the incorporation of the Amos 'n' Andy radio show (Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden) as a "business" subject to the provisions of the capital gains tax. Startled by the speed with which this decision was handed down, hardened radio toppers gasped, "They can't do this."

Yet it was done. A precedent was set, and soon the hucksters on Radio Row began hawking another sales tax capital gains corporation. This time, it was the Bergen-Charlie McCarthy show, providentially packaged and ready for sale by Julius Caesar Stein's fabulous Music Corporation of America. Charlie's sponsor, Standard Brands, had found the silk hatted wooden-head's witticisms too costly, and had allowed its option to lapse. Bergen was not finding it easy to obtain a new sponsor.

But suddenly the MCA hucksters put aside the Bergen-McCarthy negotiations, announcing that they had bigger fish to fry. The incomparable Jack Benny, anchor man of NBC's Sunday night Laugh Parade, had a handy capital gains corporation which he desired to sell. For weeks NBC and CBS bid against each other while a breathless industry watched the battle between the two giant networks.

The Jack Benny package, in which Benny

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owned the controlling interest, was called Amusement Enterprises, Inc. Its assets as described in the radio trade press include Benny's future moving pictures, his future television activities, and $1,500,000 which he claimed he had invested in improving his program. Radio Row, which had seen the price of the Jack Benny package climb to a figure of $2,310,000, including a fat 10 percent commission to the MCA, assumed that Jack Benny was part of the package. But it was quickly disabused. Lloyd Wright, Jack Benny's lawyer and said to have owned a substantial piece of Amusement Enterprises, Inc., issued a statement early in November solemnly denying that Benny was an asset of the newly-formed corporation.

"There have been misleading and false statements made in reference to current negotiations for the sale of stock to Amusement Enterprises, Inc.," declared Mr. Wright. It seemed the sale of the stock had no relation to Benny, sponsored by the American Tobacco Company, which pay him $50,000 per week for his show.

Although Lawyer Wright had made it clear that the bargaining ostensibly was solely for Benny's invaluable corporation, the trade assumed —and confirmation soon came—that where Benny's package went, there would go Benny.

When the bidding for Benny's Benny-less package reached the $2,000,000 mark, Columbia spokesmen announced that enough was enough, NBC could have it and welcome. The *Hollywood Reporter* of November 12th added details, quoting a CBS spokesman: "If Jack Benny stays on NBC with a couple of million dollars to encourage him, how is that going to set with Bob Hope, the Jim Jordans, Eddie Cantor, Red Skelton, Fred Allen, Jimmy Durante, the Ozzie Nelsons, Edgar Bergen and others?" NBC, it was indicated, in the natural course of events would have to run out of money, in which case CBS would step in once more.

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So when the NBC negotiations became snagged in Hollywood, CBS eagerly jumped into the fray again, and on November 26th it was announced that the Benny program would transfer to CBS as of January 2. At the same time Niles Trammel, president of the National Broadcasting Company, made the following announcement: "Until the United States Treasury says that such transactions are lawful, the National Broadcasting Company will continue to refuse to purchase stock in so-called production corporations where the artists who control such corporations are performing on the NBC network. Such arrangements are bound to lead to charges of discrimination between artists who are paying income taxes at the high regular rates and those who are paying at the lower rates of only 25 percent based on so-called capital gains."

CBS appeared hurt by the NBC statement. Said their spokesman: "If and when any deals are made for the purchase of radio production companies or radio properties all details of such transactions will be submitted to the Treasury Department for approval or disapproval. Therefore how, by any stretch of the imagination, can there be any question as to the propriety of such transactions? Mr. Trammell's statement is unwarranted and reflects unfairly on many creative artists who have done no more than abide by our tax laws like any business man or corporation."

The impeccable *New York Times*—perhaps as an unconscious comment on the situation by one of its linotypers—printed "lax laws," instead of "tax laws."

Exactly what had happened to ditch the NBC-Benny negotiations may never be known. Conceivably the sensitive Benny may have been irked by NBC's choice of the lawyer who came to Hollywood with Trammell. It so happened that this lawyer was the same John T. Cahill, who, as United States Attorney, prepared the case against Benny when the latter was indicted January 10, 1939, with Edward M. Chaperau, a convicted smuggler, on charges of bringing jewelry into the port of New York illegally and evading a customs fee of $700. Benny finally pleaded guilty and paid a $10,000 fine.

While conversations between NBC and representatives of the Music Corporation were in progress for the Benny deal, a new sponsor appeared for Bergen—the Coca-Cola Company. In acquiring Bergen, Coca-Cola also purchased Bergen's famous dummy, Charlie McCarthy, for a reputed $1,000,000, with Mortimer Snerd thrown in as a bonus—a fact that has thus far escaped both the newspapers and the trade press. What Charlie McCarthy, who has complained all these years of his 25 cents weekly allowance from Bergen, will say about being sold down the river for a paltry million dollars remains to be heard.

Bergen, too, it turns out now had a corporation for sale, though, unlike Benny, he made it clear that he wanted the advance approval of the Treasury Department.

The Bergen-Charlie McCarthy capital gains corporation is now under study by the Treasury Department. Meanwhile CBS has given no details of its Benny deal; merely that Benny is moving over as of January 2.

Radio Row pollsters—and they could be wrong —are ready to give substantial odds that the Treasury will throw the Bergen deal out of the window and slam it shut against further "deals" of this character. They point to the recently issued statement by U. S. Budget Director James W. Webb that federal spending in the next fiscal

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year threatens the government with a deficit unless taxes are raised. They note that Senator Styles Bridges and other Senators and Congressmen with no great love for Hollywood have recently displayed interest in tax leaks and in amendments to the present law designed to mend them.

If the Treasury takes the Bergen deal in its stride, as it took the Amos 'n' Andy deal, few who have studied the direction in which radio has been going of recent years have any illusions as to what is in store for the American listening public.

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The question as to who really controls American radio will be answered and it won't be either the network tycoons or the FCC. It will be radio's funny men, the panting, overworked comics who will find a new lease of life through the manipulation of network deals. For clearly radio will be working for the Bennys, the Bergens, the Allens and the Hopes, rather than vice versa. It will take years for the networks to amortize huge package investments in gags still to come.

Behind the comics will lurk MCA, *"octopus"* of the talent trade, and its benign Dr. Julius Caesar Stein. All he'll need to do to reduce a network president to a quaking jelly will be to threaten removal of a popular comic or two from the network's program roster, thus switching "circulation" from one network to another. He will be generous enough, presumably, to permit the networks and stations to make their investments in the creation of a television structure before showing who's boss. After all, the show's the thing, and who but MCA will control the shows?

Dr. Stein is nothing if not thorough, nothing if not logical. In 1946, his many ventures excited the admiration of David Wittels, author of a series of four articles on MCA in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Mr. Wittels described Dr. Stein as "perhaps the most powerful behind-the-scenes figure in the entertainment world." Today, two years later, *Variety*, in its November 24th issue, dubs him "Chairman of the Board of Show Business."

A licensed oculist, Stein made his first fortune in the band business. Successively, he invaded the talent trade of Hollywood, buying up agencies right and left. He is now king pin in the rich radio talent field, and the dawning era of television promises an even lusher pasture. Recently MCA has moved in with CBS as one of the four partners controlling the Tournament of Champions, Inc., which will compete with NBC's Madison Square Garden and 20th Century S.C. in televising sports.

A systematic and tidy man, Dr. Stein is not accustomed to leaving any crumbs of potential profit lying about unused. According to the *Saturday Evening Post* article, as early as 1946 he was in the habit of "urging his band leaders to buy huge annuities and insurance policies. When they saw the wisdom of his advice he sold them the policies through an insurance agency tie-up which he beforehandedly had arranged. When they needed automobiles, he stood ready to serve them, having taken over two automobile agencies. If they needed batons, fancy stands or other paraphernalia of classy bands, Stein could supply them through a company he owned. Nor did he leave them to the tender mercies of strangers if they decided to buy homes or invest in other real estate. In the nest of companies fathered by MCA there was at least one real estate firm." People who hired his bands found him just as accommodating.

He foresaw the close of prohibition and bought up bonded warehouse liquor certificates. After repeal he went into the liquor business.

Those who had hoped that the competition of television would purge radio of its idiocy and arrogance must be prepared to bury all such hopes if the Treasury decision validates the purchase, ownership and control of talent tax gains corporations by the two leading networks. Why, in that event, bother about building better programs to hold mature audiences? The networks and stations will be too burdened. They will have a vested interest in the comics, who apparently have become the bellwethers of "mass entertainment." For unfunny financial reasons the networks and stations will be obliged to keep them on the air long after their last gag man has run his last gambit. In short, comes the revolution and you'll take Benny and like him.

Even the pretense of higher educational, religious and cultural programs will go by the board. Networks saddled by huge purchases of their talents' capital gains corporations will have little to spend on what they now contemptuously refer to as "class" programs.

Finally, the day may come when radio's cherished but strictly mythical "mass audience" will leave the air as they are leaving the movie theatres. They will leave because of the lack of decent, intelligent, mature entertainment. Big Business—and big heads—in radio will then be cut down to size.

Already the *Wall Street Journal* headlines that advertising's big boom is slowing down. As *Variety* points out "the network chieftains have long deplored the fact that program costs have been getting out of hand, that only when normal price structures are restored can radio get down to the business of translating the medium into show business." Rumblings have been growing louder that radio may soon have to lower its rate structure, because of the competition of television, which in some metropolitan centers has cut very

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heavily into radio listening. James D. Shouse, chairman of the Board and president of the Crosley Broadcasting Corporation in Cincinnati, has publicly admitted that sound as sound may be on its way out a few years from now. Said Mr. Shouse: "I think that with the exception of widely scattered and remote rural areas containing some small towns television stands a good chance, not of supplementing broadcasting as we know it today, but of replacing it."

In view of this trend it is conceivable that the frantic efforts of the networks to noodle the goose of radio, largely with obsolescent and senescent comics, may make a kind of sense after all.

Is it possible that the doomed bird of AM broadcasting is being dressed up for a sale, with the movie moguls—shorn of either their theatres or their studios by current anti-trust litigation—as the prospective buyers? Not that the financial and physical merger of two culturally backward media would bring about the cultural maturity of either.

From the purely cultural standpoint, because of the opportunity it would bring to build anew, it might not be an unalloyed disaster if NBC and CBS, in their present pattern of operation, go down together locked in the fatal embrace of an MCA. The storm that has engulfed the air waves is as synthetic as the comics who are helping to pump its wind machines. The whole business has neither heart nor mind above the cost accounting level.

History is the greatest of dramatists. Who would have thought that the comics, the degraded successors of Falstaff and Sancho Panza, should be the unconscious agents that history may invoke to clear the ground for new creations of the human spirit?

Advent: In Mary-Darkness

I live my Advent in the womb of Mary
And on one night when a great star swings free
From its high mooring and walks down the sky
To be the dot above the *Christus* i,
I shall be born of her by blessed grace.
I wait in Mary-darkness, faith's walled place,
With hope's expectance of nativity.

I knew for long she carried me and fed me,
Guarded and loved me, though I could not see,
But only now, with inward jubilee,
I come upon earth's most amazing knowledge:
Someone is hidden in this dark with me.

—JESSICA POWERS.

Changing the World

EDWARD S. SKILLIN

IT IS astounding how an idea catches on. What apparently started the founder of The Christophers is that in his travels about this prosperous country he found that Americans in general are a very decent sort. There are comparatively few—he would wager it was less than one percent—imbued with subversive ideas of a Communist or other sort who seek to destroy the ideals and institutions of the God-fearing Founding Fathers. Since their numbers are limited, so the argument goes, why not raise up an equal number of avowed Christians to defend American traditions and make the world a better place? In no time at all The Christophers have signed up 120,000 members, while the first printing of their official volume* has just appeared with a first printing of 55,000 copies. Father Keller's idea is clearly getting somewhere. What is his program?

The Christophers seek to carry Christianity into the market place, into the very thick of mundane things, to be ever present side by side with their unbelieving fellowmen. One of Father Keller's prize exhibits is a charwoman who gave up sweeping out a New York office after hours to take up her profession at a girls' college dormitory, where she could exercise a good and abiding personal influence. His pages abound with instances of men and women who have given up more lucrative positions for teaching and other posts where they can accomplish more for their fellows. In this respect The Christophers movement fits in with a real tendency of the moment, for it points out to the numerous young people now desirous of doing something more than just earning a living certain fields where they may put their talents to good use.

Christophers do not turn away from their native environment (or the modern world) as evil; rather they plunge into the thick of it with the aim of making things better. Secondly, they seek out jobs and social opportunities where they may reach and influence considerable numbers of people in a Christian direction. Finally, they eschew name-calling and other destructive, negative activities in favor of positive, constructive action. Their theory here, as with Saint Paul, is to overcome evil by good.

This brings me to the very nub of their program. Their efforts are focused on a complex field, which is becoming increasingly in fashion at Catholic colleges on the Eastern seaboard: Communications Arts. It is because American newspapers, slick magazines, movies and radio programs reach so many millions. And in the Christopher analysis—here questions begin to pop up in my mind—it is in the various media communicating ideas that a million wicked people are engaged in foisting their Marxism, anti-religionism, attacks on Christian marriage and the natural law, etc., on the unsuspecting American people.

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* *You Can Change the World. James M. Keller. Longmans.* $3.00.

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I have always been skeptical about the villain thesis of history, and I wonder how aptly it can apply here. The dominantly materialistic aspects of the American scene clearly derive, not nearly as much from the machinations of the Marxists and other minority ideologically subversive publicists, as from "Keeping Up with the Joneses." I think of ceaseless pressure against consumer resistance from highway billboards; car cards in the subway; tabloids; Sunday papers; picture, women's, news and smart fiction magazines; soap opera and quiz programs; Hollywood versions of the good life. American addiction to entertainment gadgets and creature comforts bolsters up a well-cushioned manner of living which is terrifying to compare with the struggle for bare existence which is characteristic of nearly every other country on the globe. Is not our dominant materialism anything but Marxian in its slant? Besides, Americans have no consciousness of history and a little developed sense of abiding values. I wonder if these are not the real obstacles to our Christianization, rather than the diabolical propaganda of a comparatively few subversive men. That is the first thing that puzzles me about the Christopher idea.

Perhaps I can justify my hesitation by recourse to an example. (Does not Elmer insist that you should always use an example?) Imagine a zealous Christopher who has obtained a job with the *Time-Life* organization. After he has learned his way around he does uncover a Communist or two and tells the editor just who has been getting in that dirty work with his nefarious blue pencil. That will have accomplished something. But will anything in those publications basically be changed? Will not the massive wheels continue to grind out their characteristically materialistic product week after week exactly as before? Can a lone Christopher or even several Christophers—equipped as they are—actually make any real impact on such a pachyderm? My guess is that as Christophers their presence there would be virtually meaningless.

One of the most impelling reasons that such doubts beset me is the movement's apparent lack of emphasis on personal formation. It is highly significant, I think, that less than 2 out of 385 pages in "You Can Change the World" deals with the problem of formation (and these 2 even explicitly minimize it). In their eagerness to rush out into the market place with little in their hands (or up their sleeves) Christophers are to feel that a desire to help, or to be better Christians is enough. When I think of the diluted form in which the intellectual and liturgical aspects of Catholicism are normally presented in this country, I wonder how the well-intentioned Christopher can be counted on to have much of a conscious treasure to share. To cite the truism about action following being and the Christian ideal of action flowing from contemplation seems to be particularly apposite here. What is there to prevent most Christophers from merely skimming over the slogan-studded surface?

This unhappy presentiment is reinforced by the observations of "You Can Change the World" on the arts and the techniques of the various forms of expression. I find myself thinking of a football coach on the eve of the traditional game, and, when I have pushed that out of my mind, of "How to Write in 20 Lessons." And finally the fate of the seed that fell upon stony ground keeps recurring to my mind.

How can we change the world? I wish I had a concrete formula. There is something truly heartening in the news that so many thousands are newly dedicated to influencing education, labor unions, government and the big circulation media in the United States in a more Christian direction. And when I compare this new activism with the red-baiting which has absorbed so much American Catholic energy in the past twenty-five years—and resulted in so little—I can see that even in their beginnings The Christophers represent a step forward. Moreover, if a number of people by calling themselves Christophers take being a Christian more seriously, all to the good. But will these plentiful green shock troops succeed in affecting the world appreciably? Or will they merely be deluding themselves by believing that they are taking part in any genuine process of change? I cannot help thinking of the handful who run a single Catholic Worker House of Hospitality or an interracial Friendship House—or even of certain tiny groups of families living, working and praying together in a Catholic farming commune. Then I assay the Christophers' claim about changing the world and I wonder.

Communications

CHRISTIAN INDUSTRIALISM?

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: How about letting one of the working stiffs in on your quaint discussion between the "we-and-the-Pope" gang and the Fanny Farmer boys? I'm one of the lads from the filing office who stands before you white-collared and without college degree. I'm part of the "masses" we've been hearing so much about lately.

Lining the teams up, here is the way it looks to me: Mr. Ludlow (et al) holds that industrialism is sin: in its very essence there is violation of human rights. Mr. Ludlow further adds, "Destroy the Frankenstein!" To which Mr. Cort replies, "That was no Frankenstein you saw me with last night—that was a drunken bum." Father Daniel M. Cantwell and Father William Smith, along with Mr. Cort, want to sober up that drunken bum with the "vocational system."

Both sides have fought under the banners of excerpts from the papal encyclicals. Even the question of *ex cathedra* decisions in the social encyclicals has been bounced about.

Then along comes Norman McKenna and injects the third opinion that the contestants aren't really fighting about the nature of industrialism at all, but rather about the Christianization of one's environment. The apostolate. Here he would seem to be cozying up to Father Cantwell, who asks in his letter of November 19 for "the embracing of the 20th century, and the embracing of steel."

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It seems to me that Father Cantwell and Mr. McKenna are sketching lightly the blueprints needed, while Robert Ludlow simply says, "we do not possess the technical ability to draw minute plans." (Incidentally Father Cantwell gave much more than a light sketch in his October 1 "Secularism in the Church.")

If the Distributists really believe that man should make matter serve him, I think they should proceed to make technology and science serve them Christianly. When they seek to be removed from their environment, either by flight or by destroying it, they have permitted industrialism to become the cause of their action. Not Christianity.

It would seem to me that the work at hand would be a beginning to return God's world to Him. This beginning must be made in the 20th century through the Christianization of the worker—whether he is on a farm or an assembly line. It will come through the Christianization of our environment—but remember it is necessarily a 20th century environment; we work today.

Bob Szabo.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The debate on Christian Industrialism would be more profitable if based on actual experiments. Such experiments exist. I described one of them in The Commonweal of July 25, 1947, under the title *Workers' Commuuity.*

It is true that Boimondau is a small plant. But when I discussed this point with the members of the Community they all insisted that the principle would hold good for a huge plant—the only thing to do would be to consider each shop as autonomous.

Even in a small plant, as the watch-casing factory of Boimondau, there are purely mechanical and monotonous jobs. Men who are not especially creative by temperament fit in those jobs. It is not the kind of work, mass production or industrialism, which is anti-Christian. *It is the entire conception of man.* When asked "Are you watchcasing makers who own their factory?" Barbu who started the Workers' Communities in France, invariably balks: "We are people who are trying to live a whole man's life."

The division of man into separate compartments, that's the evil capitalism is responsible for. Therefore, as Catholic Barbu points out, a redistribution of wealth is not the solution either. From slavery to serfdom, from serfdom to hiring of labor, successive steps have been taken toward the road of freedom. What has to be evolved next are new cells for a new society. How this is being done now at Boimondau and throughout all the communitarian experiments in France I cannot explain in this letter. The whole movement answers, and against tremendous odds, the different questions raised in connection with Christian Industrialism: how can mass production be reconciled with the demands of human personality? How can the worker be responsible for the whole of what he makes? How can capitalism be dissolved without being overthrown by violence? How can workers take over, intelligently and effectively?

Claire Huchet Bishop.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Mr. Cort's rationalization to the point of absurdity of his own misconception of my statement (the worker must be responsible for the whole product) does not disprove that statement. Let me try to make that point again, more fully for the sake of clearing up this very important question about the Christian nature of work.

The worker is responsible not for the aggregate of the elements in a product (nails and hide, etc., using the analogy of a shoe), but for the *wholeness* of the product. It is the worker's responsibility to see that the parts of a shoe, sole, heel, etc., are fashioned and put together according to the right idea of a shoe.

A nail is an element, a distinct thing by itself, but the sole or heel are conceptions that have meaning only in relation to the idea of a shoe. Therefore, to the maker of shoes, it makes no difference where the nails or hides come from. What he is concerned with is the idea of a shoe and the only significance nails and hides have for him is in relation to this idea of a shoe.

As it has been pointed out, in the mathematical order 6 is not the same as three and three. In the order of making the maker is concerned with the final product, the 6 so to speak. It is how he puts the 3 and 3 together and not where they come from that concerns the worker. And it is this responsibility over the right putting together of parts, which have their *significance* in relation to a *whole* in the mind of the maker, that I speak about.

Mr. Cort's reference to cathedrals to bear out his point is rather amazing. Hasn't Mr. Cort ever read Dillon's *Architecture and Sculpture?* One of the most fundamental things to be considered about architecture is that it is a *coordinating* art. In architecture the coordinated parts have a function and a certain identity which are *not lost* in the act of coordination. We can consider a door or a building as being well or badly made regardless of the quality of the building. But has Mr. Cort ever seen a "good" shoe with bad soles? So the cathedral builders *controlled parts* which were *also whole* things in themselves.

Going from the particular to the general, I feel that Mr. Cort's approach is a narrow one simply because he does not take *enough* under consideration. There is more to this question of industrialism and Christianity than mass production and the human personality. It is a question of the motivation of industrialism at its formation and now, as against man's divine right to property in the means of production. "Because property is natural to man; because property is a bulwark against the exploitation of man by man; because unless you own the means of production you cannot control production; because unless you control you cannot be responsible; because responsibility for his deeds and for what his deeeds effect (both moral and intellectual responsibility) is the very mark of man."—Gill, *The Autobiography.*

Industrialism came about to facilitate the idea of production for *sale;* it helped produce an *acquisitive* society bent on piling up material goods; while, I think, with the Distributists, that the Christian idea is production for *use*

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and a *functional* society. I think it was a good scholastic idea that economics was to provide the best *material means* for the *practice of virtue* and the *attainment of God's grace.* Industrialism cannot provide these kinds of material means. The machine, as Chesterton pointed out, if it were *owned* by those mechanics who truly love machines as painters the paint, could be that great benefit to man that capitalist ownership has presented.

As for those "practical hard-headed employers" who are practicing Mr. Cort's romantic proposals, isn't it obvious by this time that it is "profitable" to keep the workers "happy" because then, like well tended machines, they produce more. Since when are "practical, hard-headed (I keep thinking of those impractical, soft-headed idealists in Palestine 2,000 years ago who sought to change the face of the earth) employers" motivated by Christian charity and respect for the dignity of human personality?

If Belloc's prophecy of the servile state is coming true as it seems to be, Mr. Cort, by trying to give a Christian smell to capitalism may ultimately find himself "Christianizing" a slave state.

EMIL ANTONUCCI.

Lancaster, Penna.

TO the Editors: To one who loves them both, it would be distressing to watch the *Catholic Worker* and THE COMMONWEAL gnawing at each other's throat —it would be, that is, if it weren't such good reading.

It is a shame, though, that Mr. Cort should be so assaulted simply for being practical. I thought his defense in your Oct. 29 issue complete enough to cover the next three or four attacks, at least. The CW ambition seems to be to remove the Serpent from the Garden; Mr. Cort's to water down the venom in that irremovable fang. With Mr. Cort, I await some concrete suggestions from the theorists; meanwhile, let us string along with those we have (the Papal ones, for instance, which seem to be shaping up here under the name of "Industry Council Plan").

The same clash occurs in the pacifist argument; surely there is a third way for those who are not particularly anxious to shout either "Man the bomb!" *or* "Shoot if you must this old gray head?". And surely there is some comfortable middle ground between the evil of a "bung-dropping" specialized industrialism and the Promised Land of a half-acre and cow for each of us? There must be others, like myself, who are not particularly attracted by the promise of a half-acre and a cow (neither of which we'd know what to do with). Can't we like having a delicatessen on the corner—maybe even with a little neon trim around its front—without necessarily resigning ourselves to a life of will-less vamp creasing?

E. G. GALLAGHER.

FOR THE RECORD

Lenox, Mass.

TO the Editors: I have been for so many years a subscriber to THE COMMONWEAL and an admirer of its spirit in so many matters that it always troubles and surprises me if I see in the magazine anything that does not seem to me to be fair and accurate. In your number of November 5th is a suggestive editorial on the Negro vote. In it you state that my friend "Dr. Channing H. Tobias of the Phelps Stokes Foundation, who travelled a road that long seemed very parallel to the Moscow Highway, started the march for the doors of the Council on African Affairs. . . ." This implies that Dr. Tobias was a "fellow traveller," although recognizing that his recent break with the Council on African Affairs showed a dissatisfaction with what he believed to be some Communistic tendencies developing in the organization.

I do not think that the implications regarding Dr. Tobias' past are in any way justified. He has always been a liberal, especially on matters of civil rights, but when I remind you that until latterly when he turned to Mr. Truman on the Civil Rights issue, he has been generally a Republican; that he has always been an active member and supporter of the Christian Church, and of sincere good-will towards Protestants, Catholics and Jews; that he has been and is president of the Trustees of Hampton Institute; that he was a member of the President's Committee on Civil Rights; that he received distinguished government awards for his services during the war on the Joint Army and Navy Committee on Welfare and Recreation and the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service; that he is a whole-hearted supporter of the world peace ideals of the United Nations; and that he has always believed in the private enterprise system; you will realize why the reference disturbs me. It does injustice to a great Negro American and the causes he represents especially as he has never been at all sympathetic with Marxian Communism: in fact its disregard of the sacred rights of personality, its totalitarianism, and its general attitude toward religion have shocked him profoundly, even though he may have recognized certain social welfare advances made in modern Russia.

It is not like THE COMMONWEAL to imply that people are "red" because they are liberals, and I feel sure that in this case you will want to make right what was apparently your mistaken impression regarding Dr. Tobias. It is most unlikely that any man who has received such recognition as those indicated from conservatives and liberals alike, and who has advocated the constructive Christian causes with which he has been identified, could travel a road "very parallel to the Moscow highway."

I am, with great respect,

ANSON PHELPS STOKES.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Each year, during the month of December, The Society for the Propagation of the Faith sponsors the Christmas Leper Fund, and all the lay Catholics of the United States are asked to contribute a small amount. It is possible to cure a leper, if the right drugs are used on him, and if the treatment is administered consistently. It costs twenty-five cents to buy one dose of promin for a leper. If a leper is given one dose every day for a year, there is a very good chance that he will be cured!

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Until recently, the sentence of a living death in a leper colony could not be reprieved; only the holy imitators of Father Damien and the nuns who assisted them, consecrating their lives to the service of the lepers, could lighten the burden a little, by administering to the spiritual and physical needs of their patients.

Now, with the advance of science and medicine, the conditions have changed. Lepers can be cured. For a few cents donated by the Catholics of the United States out of their Christmas bounty, more of these unfortunates, who are lepers today, may take their places tomorrow among the ranks of the unafflicted.

Contribute to the Lepers' Christmas Fund this year, and make your own Christmas a more blessed one. Offerings for The Society for the Propagation of the Faith Christmas Leper Fund may be sent to the National Office—109 East 38th Street, New York City, New York, or to your Diocesan Director.

Most Rev. THOMAS J. MCDONNELL,
National Director,
Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The Labor Movement

The Longshore Strike

WE HAVE NOW seen the first *authorized* general strike by Joe Ryan's International Longshoremen's Association, AFL, since the union was founded, before the first World War. Since the second World War alone, however, there have been a number of unauthorized strikes.

Things have reached the point now where any agreement recommended by Joe is automatically turned down by his membership. That is what happened this year. The big difference this year was that Joe took the hint and reversed his own position. After two weeks the employers offered the men a better agreement and they accepted it.

Three years ago, in October, 1945, Ryan didn't even bother to ask his members if they wanted the agreement he had negotiated. They struck anyway and stayed out for 18 days. Ryan fought the strike; the Communist Party moved in with its well-trained cohorts and its legal brains and for a few days it was touch-and-go whether or not the East Coast waterfront would go the way of Harry Bridges and the West Coast. And what a *beeyutiful* plum that would have been for Joe Stalin's fruit-bowl—the power to stop all seaborne commerce to and from the United States.

Joe Ryan is lifetime president of the ILA and it must be embarrassing for a lifetime president to be reminded at regular intervals that his membership has so little confidence in him.

This year the longshoremen finally accepted an agreement providing for a 13-cent increase, a welfare plan that is still to be worked out, one week's paid vacation for those working 800 hours a year and two weeks for men who have put in 1,350 hours a year. Plus several fringe concessions.

There are 2,080 working hours a year, figuring 40 hours a week, and it will give you some idea of conditions on the docks to know that in 1947 about 70 percent of the ILA membership could not get 1,350 hours work. At that time a man got one week's vacation if he worked that much in a year's time. The new vacation provision is a big improvement.

The weakness of the new contract is indicated by a leaflet put out by the Longshore Conference of the ACTU (Association of Catholic Trade Unionists). In part it read: "The ordinary longshoreman is more interested in the health and welfare fund and in job conditions than he is in the money. What we want mainly is this: 1) A definite and adequate plan for a health, welfare and pension fund. 2) A safety man on every pier. 3) One shape a day." This leaflet came out just before the employers' final offer.

"Shape" is short for "shape-up," which is an antiquated, slave-market method of hiring still used in the longshore industry, or at least that part of it under ILA contracts. The men have to line up twice a day—7:55 a.m. and 12:55 p.m.—and are then picked out by a boss stevedore who is also a member of the ILA. (For an excellent article on the evils of the shape-up and other aspects of longshore work, particularly the high degree of physical danger, see "Longshoremen's Case" in *America* for November 20. The *New York Sun* has also been running a series called "Crime on the Waterfront" which brings out a lot of interesting facts about racketeering on the docks.)

It is revealing to compare the ILA contract with the West Coast agreement, which was concluded about the same time. Bridge's boys were on the street much longer, since September 1, in a drag-out struggle with the West Coast shippers, who hoped that they could rid themselves of a Communist union that was given to "quickie" strikes.

They couldn't get rid of Bridges, but they did get the national CIO to underwrite the contract and Harry will probably make the boys behave a little better in the future. The contract provides for a 15-cent increase, raising the rate to $1.82 (the East Coast is now $1.88), but the work-day is six hours and all gangs are guaranteed two hours overtime on each shift.

Also the maximum work-day is nine hours, unlike the East Coast where men have been known to work 16 hours and more in a row, with only time out for meals. And on the West Coast there is a hiring hall—no shape-up—and men go to work with dignity and not like cattle. Because it is a rotary hiring hall, and the number of union members is limited, they also know that their union dues entitle them to a fair share of the available work and they know that in normal times there will be a fair amount of work for everybody. Unlike the East Coast, where a minority of the men, the lucky ones who are on the inside and get all the overtime, are enjoying a feast while the ordinary Joes—who pay the same dues—are struggling through a famine. Another reason for this is that there are two or three times as many men admitted to the union as there are jobs for them.

But to Ryan the West Coast set-up is "Communism"

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because Bridges is a Communist, or the next thing to it. And the tragic thing is that many of the men go along with this, and many others believe it when Ryan and the bosses tell them that the shape-up is necessary, and others don't want a rotary hiring hall because they are always hoping for the killing that the present chaos makes possible.

So here we have a union, composed and led mainly by Catholics, which is party to a very messy situation—a situation that is rotten with injustice, graft, racketeering, insecurity, poverty, danger from accidents and danger from mobsters, interracial tensions and all-around ignorance. There is not a single publication in the whole union, either local or otherwise. Even ILA officials can't tell you how many locals there are in the Port of New York. Most of them don't know anything about the industry, beyond what happens on the piers where their own men work. On some piers you can find members of fourteen different locals working. The ACTU and the Jesuits at Xavier Labor School have tried to do something, have tried to help the men find a way out of the mess, and they have made some headway over the years. But the Communists are ahead of them as of this moment.

It is a situation that the Church could probably cure if we functioned in that unified, coordinated way that our enemies always flatter us by assuming. But we don't. Most of those who could do something take a hands-off attitude. Others go so far as to give Ryan and his cronies a personal blessing. Subjectively, their intentions are perhaps good or their ignorance invincible, but objectively it is a scandal and we might as well face it.

JOHN C. CORT.

The Stage & Screen

The Silver Whistle

IT WOULD have been nice if the Theatre Guild had included a note on their present author among the cast biographies at the back of the Biltmore program. I should have liked to know more about Robert E. McEnroe. I think he has written a gentle and appealing fantasy, and as far as I know, it's his first Broadway job. The fable is not difficult. A verbose and lovable hobo gets himself inserted into an Old People's Home by dint of finding a birth-certificate in an ashcan. This paper proves that he is all of seventy-seven years old, rather than his actual forty-five. The action of the play takes place in the church garden adjoining the home, and it is in this serene prospect that Oliver Erwenter proceeds to change the lives of a number of septuagenarians. Miss Hoadley manages to stay off the bottle long enough to help with a surprising bazaar; the cynical Mrs. Hanmer departs no whit from her sarcasm and yet cannot resist the said Erwenter's tall stories; Mrs. Gross manages to go on a little less dismally about sin; and the equally frail Messrs. Cherry and Beebe decide, after a dose of the Erwenter bread-crumb potion, to court the home's prettiest inmate, Mrs. Sampler. There is also time for the tireless Oliver to assist in the wooing of the young directress of the place. And that is that. The thing adds up to a feeble second act and a poor last one, but it is by all odds the most attractive offering of a desperate season. It is necessary to state that, with extenuations, a good portion of its success is due to José Ferrer's playing of the star rôle. Mr. Ferrer is a Lunt disciple. He can handle any number of lines and punctuate them with the appropriate gesture. He can move, leer, roar, chuckle and snort; in short he is an actor. The trouble is, he is not—could never be—lovable. He is too unctuous for that, too slick; and he has never laid any claim to being personable. When he appears as a greasy, certainly dirty, tramp, I'm afraid a good deal of the ensuing action is rather hampered by the fact that his delivery is as creamed as his face. There is no simplicity, no wonder about him.

I think it is fair to stress that some responsibility for this hurdle must be shared by the author. Mr. McEnroe has a fierce amount of twaddle to speak about nature. Everything and everyone is compared to a rose, or a sunset, in hyperbolic language with loud references to Omar Khayyam. What is even more interesting will be that here, the old conception of *clown* or *hobo* is completely reversed. Dream is opposed to life to its (the vision's) detriment. Oliver Erwenter is an exponent of sex. I have not, I think, heard every Freudian cliché dealt out more steadily than in this play which is supposed to be a dateless fairy tale. And just by way of digression, I suggest it is time that someone publish a dictionary of Freudian clichés for the benet of critics. I realize that such a book would still be a partial affair, but it would be highly useful. I am at present starting a small list of my own with an already over-crowded "L" section: all those endless precepts covering life with a capital L. Life as unlimited action; Life as unlimited shopping; Life as unlimited bridge; Life as therapeutic art; most of all, Life as ubiquitous copulation. In line with this latter conception, I have no doubt it will soon be possible to tune in to a certain local radio station and hear "Music To Squeeze By."

However, this nasty digression aside, I want to record the play as a whole, as a delightful evening, peopled by some of the best actors on the street. Doro Merande is wonderful in a terrible wig and a selection of old Mother Hubbards. I also thought Eleanor Wilson's young proprietress attractive; William Lynn as enchanting as ever; and Kathleen Comegys, Frances Brandt and Burton Mallory exactly as good as they could be. The Guild is to be congratulated for taking at last a chance on a play; but this must not excuse them for having (I suggest) kept their designer to a minimum of nothing. Herbert Brodkin's set is not even good red herring. It comes off as conventional architectural Broadway, but obviously cheaply conceived and executed. A tiresome prospect for three acts and four scenes. (*at the Biltmore*)

A Note On "Streetcar"

THE SPATE of tear-stained people hauling along 47th Street at the finish hour of 11 p.m. intrigued this reporter enough to inquire into the cause. It ap-

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pears that Gertrude Flynn has been substituting for Jessica Tandy in the lead of Tennessee Williams's prize-winner. Miss Flynn is a respected actress and I may say in the hour I managed to view her work—standing precisely on my own coat, my husband's, plus his only hat—I felt I could understand the underground hoopla going on about this performance.

Miss Flynn manages to instil emotion, as well as symptoms, in a hazardous rôle. It's a rewarding job of acting and I think you will be lucky if you can catch it. (*at the Ethel Barrymore*) KAPPO PHELAN.

Put Out More Flags

IT IS AMAZING how quickly Hollywood forgets the good pictures it made about the war, real war as it was shown in "Guadalcanal Diary," "The Story or Ernie Pyle," "A Walk in the Sun." Too soon, too soon they are coming back to the glamor of combat.

The latest exhibit, *"Fighter Squadron,"* might have been called "The Rover Boys in the Air Force." It has all the old clichés: the handsome, daredevil fliers who say, "Fellows, I got one," when they make a direct hit on a Nazi plane; the horseplay in the squadron quarters; the hard-boiled, softhearted squadron commander (John Rodney); the former Flying Tiger (Edmond O'Brien) who gets this post and loses some of his boyishness and becomes just as hard-boiled; the sure-shot captain (Robert Stack) who leaves to get married, but returns in time to pull off a heroic rescue of his major, etc., etc., even unto the typical new recruits who are scared to death but whose adoration of the "old" boys pulls them through. As you watch this movie you keep thinking it seems like something out of the distant past—not the war, of course, but this glamorization of it. And you hope if Hollywood can't make realistic war pictures, they'll leave the subject alone.

"Sealed Verdict" could have been a good post-war film. It deals with the trial of some Nazi war criminals and with one American major (Ray Milland) in particular, a man who is not really a soldier but a lawyer in uniform. He is worried because he thinks one Nazi general (John Hoyt) has not been given a fair trial. Since most of the exterior shots in this movie were taken in Europe and since the subject matter is timely, this material and good cast should have been used better. The result as it stands is little more than a confused melodrama with much too much talk and too many subplots that only complicate the main issue which isn't too well thought out in the first place. Newcomer Florence Marly is introduced to add a romantic note for Major Milland, but her position as a French woman and perhaps a collaborator isn't clear. Maybe in real life these cases were not cut and dried either; but it's too bad that a movie like this didn't know what is was trying to say and then say it preferably in a cinematic style.

"Rogue's Regiment" comes off much better as a post-war melodrama. At least it has no pretentions other than being a good thriller as it goes about its business of having an American intelligence officer (Dick Powell) join the Foreign Legion in Saigon in order to track down a for-

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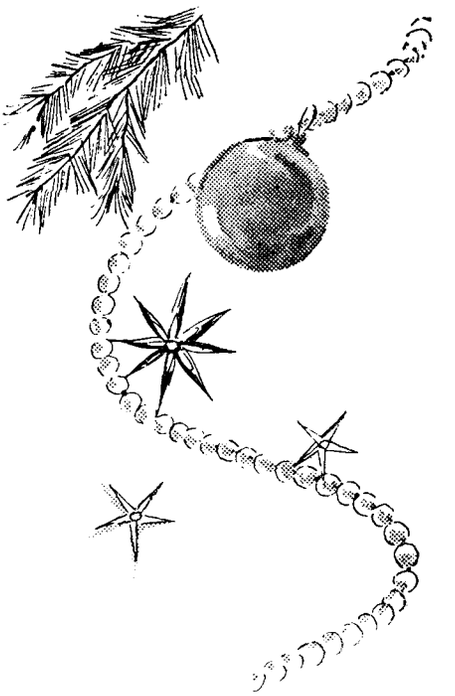

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mer high ranking Nazi official (Stephen McNally). Director Robert Florey instills an exciting note of mystery and suspense into the plot; and the principals, with the help of a good supporting cast that includes Marta Toren, Vincent Price and Edgar Barrier, play the thing for every thrill that's in it. You may have a feeling as you see these movies that Nazis are going to turn up for years and years in many places, but you are also sure that some intelligence officer will eventually locate every one of them, so help us Hollywood.

If you really want to see the Navy in action without any fictional monkey shines, I heartily recommend *"The Secret Land."* This is the documentary film, photographed in Technicolor on the recent Byrd expedition to Antarctica. You will be impressed by the elaborate preparations for the voyage and the first-rate shots of the Navy in action on sea and on southern ice wastes. Because this picture is so well documented, the scene in which men rescue the sufferers from a crashed plane is as exciting as anything movies have to offer. I wish in editing this picture, Commander Frederick Y. Smith had followed through on some of these shots more closely and had given us a little more of the human interest stuff; but actually "The Secret Land" is too good a documentary to merit complaints rather than praise. Furthermore it is reassuring to see a movie about our fighting men in which they fight enemies who are not other fighting men.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books

The Rape of Poland. Stanislaw Mikolajczky. Whittlesey. $4.00.
The War We Lost. Constantin Fotitch. Viking. $3.50.
The Struggle Behind the Iron Curtain. Ferenc Nagy. Macmillan. $6.00.

HERE ARE three different records of national tragedies, written by personalities of very heterogeneous personality and background. Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, leader of the olish Peasant Party and ex-Premier of his country, is an excellent narrator and a highly efficient political writer. Only a hard-boiled reader or a biased person will be able to take in his emotional report of the Polish sufferings under German and Russian totalitarianism without being deeply touched.

After the Teheran conference Mikolajczyk appealed to Stalin for Poland's future independence. He hoped that a sovereign Poland would have enduring pacts with both her western and her eastern allies.

"You must include Hungary in that group," Stalin said cryptically, "it will change completely when we get there."

Mikolajczyk asked the red czar bluntly whether he had decided to make Poland a Communistic state after the war.

"No," Stalin answered hypocritically, "absolutely not. Communism does not fit the Poles. They are too individualistic, too nationalistic. Poland's future economy should be based on private enterprise. Poland will be a Capitalistic state. . . . Poland will not be disturbed by fratricidal fights." The Soviet dictator even promised that he would give orders that non-Communist parties be allowed to work in Poland without being branded as "Fascists" and "Reactionaries" by Soviet propaganda.

No reader can blame the Polish patriot for being skeptical about such lavish promises. He proved to be more realistic than Roosevelt and Churchill. Mikolajczyk tells the shameful story of how Stalin betrayed his promises, tried everything in order to intimidate the non-Communists of Poland, the great majority of the nation, by secret groups, open groups, security police, the Red Army, Special Commissions, and Soviet-patterned "National Councils." The small Communist minority gained absolute control of Poland, Mikolajczyk claims, simply because it alone possessed arms. "History reveals instances where a mob of a hundred thousand, armed with little more than rocks and fists, has overcome despotic rule by one assault on a key city or sector. Today is another day. If the despot owns several armored cars . . . he can rule. The technology of terror has risen far beyond the vehemence of a naked crowd." He thinks that what is strange is not that the Communists conquered little Poland, but that it took them two and a half years. "We held out because we are a romantic people who can endure much if the prospect of liberty remains on the horizon. We lasted because the deeply ingrained religion brought solace and hope."

Mikolajczk, who grimly opposed the Communists until October, 1947, lost his fight. A military court in Warsaw had already received instructions to "liquidate" him. He barely managed to reach England. The fear of this exile, as of most of his enslaved compatriots, is that Stalin may some day say to the democracies: "We will hereafter remain behind the Iron Curtain of the Stettin-Trieste line; we will not bother you further." Acceptance of such a solution seems to the author of this book the betrayal of many millions of Christian and democratic Europeans who have been subdued by a totalitarian minority.

Fotitch's story of Yugoslavian history during World War II is not as full-blooded as Mikolajczyk's fascinating book. It is a sober report on how the Western Allies made one of their most disastrous mistakes by shifting their support from Mihailovich to Tito.

Fotitch, Yugoslavian Ambassador to the United States during the war years, gives many interesting details about the "opportunism" of President Roosevelt and other high American officials in face of the Mihailovich-Tito rift. Unfortunately Mr. Fotitch, a Serb, is so indignant about the atrocities committed by Pavelich's fascist "Ustashis," that he reacts with an anti-Croat bias of his own. His emphasis is often more Serbian than Yugoslavian. He calls Serbs and Croats "two peoples."

Croats are Catholics and Serbs are Orthodox, and therefore the Croats write Latin and the Serbs Cyrillic characters, but their native tongue is the same: there is only one Serbo-Croat language. Any halfway intelligent person can learn to read the other alphabet within an hour and to write it within a week. Before the first World War, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy incited the hate of the Serbs and Croats against each other for reasons of *"divide et impera"*; the same was done by Hitler and Mussolini. But in spite of the fratricidal war-atrocities, the future of these closely intermingled groups lies in national unity.

Ferenc Nagy, now 45, has written his personal story: his rise from sturdy peasant stock to premiership of the first Hungarian post-war coalition cabinet. He is proud

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of his humble descent as well as of his successful career "without the benefits of formal education." But the 16 months of his government ended in failure, "being undermined from within and strangled from without." While on leave in Switzerland, he was forced by a Communist *coup d'état* to resign from office, for "singlehanded, no small nation could stem the tide." Nagy has now settled on a farm in Virginia.

Nagy reveals in detail how the Communists converted Hungary into a satellite of the Soviet Union and dissolved the only freely elected Parliament in Southeastern Europe. He tells how even racial hatred was suddenly fostered by the Communists, with the factory workers of Diosgyoer staging a pogrom in the city of Miskole. Members of the Marxist youth stoned some Jews in Kunmadaras and innocent members of Nagy's party were "liquidated" as scapegoats for this Communist-inspired anti-Semitic action. Nagy shows how Soviet pressure frustrated Hungarian hopes for freedom and a decent government.

No doubt, compared to Mr. Mikolajczyk's dynamic personality, the Hungarian peasant leader may seem to be a figure of minor calibre. But there are remarkable parallels in the actions of both men. They were striving for a unified peasantry that might be able to block Communist expansion, they felt their countries were integral parts of the Occident, they were told by Stalin that he would respect their countries' independence. Both men hoped to establish a secure basis for Liberty through majority rule, but were stopped by the small Communist minority, their terror methods and Russian assistance. Both tried a policy of compromise, often despite their own distrust, after they had learned that the American and British statesmen trusted the Soviet Union.

There are still today many readers on this side of the Atlantic who live so far away from Soviet pressure that they think, you can compromise with the Kremlin. To all of them I recommend a careful study of the books of these progressive peasant leaders, who tried sincerely to cooperate with the Communists, but were doomed to complete failure. MAX FISCHER.

The Northerner. Joan Colebrook. Scribners. $3.50.

IT WOULD seem that Miss Colebrook meant the title of this book in a generic, rather than specific sense. And for any reader blessed with other than a card-file memory, the genus will sometimes get out of hand.

All goes well at the start. Miss Colebrook begins with an introduction to the story of Richard Cromwell and his family. He is a dairy farmer in the Australian hinterland of North Queensland who has dreams of making himself a country squire. These dreams eventually lead him to over-extend himself, and bring about his ultimate failure and collapse. But by this time the reader is fairly well lost. The main trunk of the story—Cromwell—has branched to include his wife. Then it has again divided to include their four children. From there the eruption of the branches and branchlets, twigs and twiglets of husbands and lovers, friends and enemies, relations, business partners and acquaintances proceeds with confusing rapidity. It is only with a masterful effort on the part of both Miss Colebrook and the reader, and with the sense of leaving much unfinished business about,

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that the story is finally brought back to Cromwell long enough for him to die.

It is true that Miss Colebrook has produced a fair picture of a family in *The Northerner*. But in the process of condensing the life of a family into even a rather bulky novel a certain amount of simplification of the true picture is the rule. And in this case the rule has been unfortunately overlooked.

In spite of these criticisms, *The Northerner* succeeds in two respects. Having been born in North Queensland, Miss Colebrook is thoroughly familiar with the locale of her story. This gives it a color, and above all a feeling, which adds greatly to its power. Also, some of its passages reveal in Miss Colebrook a rare and fine sort of understanding of the inner nature of human beings. These flashes of compassionate awareness do much to lighten what might otherwise become a rather tedious tale. JAMES O. FREDERICK.

The Collected Poems of John Peale Bishop. Scribner's. $4.00.
The Collected Essays of John Peale Bishop. Scribner's. $4.50.

JOHN PEALE BISHOP was a Princeton contemporary of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Edmund Wilson—in fact, he is the Tom D'Invilliers of *This Side of Paradise*. Before his death in 1944 at the age of 52 he had published two novels, several volumes of poetry, and a number of essays in literary magazines. In the early 'twenties he worked on *Vanity Fair*, of which he became managing editor, and during the late war he held a couple of posts in Government cultural agencies. He spent the greater part of his adult life, however, as a "gentleman of independent means" residing in France or on Cape Cod.

In spite of his fortunate escape from the commercial pressures that tended to mold the careers of Fitzgerald and Wilson, Bishop is a lesser novelist than the former and, as a critic, both less learned and more academic than the latter. One respects Wilson's piety in editing and introducing the "Collected Essays," but a volume of about half the length would have been more flattering to his friend's reputation. Many of the essays and miscellaneous pieces date sadly: "Homage to Hemingway" and "The Missing All," an account of the decay of the Puritan tradition in America, are outstanding among the major critical studies. In the "Aphorisms and Notes" and elsewhere, isolated sentences reveal a mind of astonishing intuitive power that is seemingly incapable of sustained and closely-knit reasoning.

It is on the *Collected Poems*, then, that Bishop's reputation must stand or fall. Allen Tate has edited them and supplied a personal memoir of his friend; he makes no attempt, however, to evaluate Bishop's poetic achievement. Wilson is more venturesome; he writes, "(Bishop's) echoings of other poets now seemed no more important than catchphrases and intonations picked up in conversation that do not affect one's opinions or the quality of one's personality." Alas, I cannot agree. If it were only his cadences that Bishop had borrowed from Yeats, Pound and Eliot—but he has borrowed so much of their subject matter, too. Or perhaps that again could be excused, if he had not also pilfered their imagery, particularly Yeats's.

Yet certain of Bishop's poems must survive—"Speaking of Poetry," for instance, which Mr. Tate has skillfully maneuvered onto the opening page of *Collected Poems*. This subtle poem will find its way into many future anthologies, and along with it, probably, a handful of extremely personal and sensuous love poems. Whether any poems of a more reflective nature will be considered to possess real depth beneath their highly polished surface is more than I can say. The "years that bring the philosophic mind" to others, brought to John Peale Bishop at least the mastery of verse technique. VIVIAN MERCIER.

America in Perspective. Edited by Henry Steele Commager. Mentor Books. $.35.

THIS little book is an attempt to answer a big question: What is an American? Henry Steele Commager has permitted twenty-one foreign observers to attempt an answer to the question just mentioned. Eight were English; two Scottish; one Irish; three Germans; three French; two Hungarians; one Pole and one Russian. Not only such well-known observers as Bryce and Tocqueville are mentioned, but others less well known, as Pulszky and Petrov. In time, the letters range from those written in the colonial period by Crevecoeur to material written in this decade by Denis W. Brogan. Incidentally some of the material by the last-named author is especially good on the subject of flag worship in this nation. The editor has made an excellent selection. We really see ourselves as others see us in this pocket-book. Good to read in your spare moments on the train.
PAUL KINIERY.

The Mexico We Found. Fanchon Royer. Bruce. $2.50.

THE adventures encompassed in traveling round Mexico and Guatemala and shooting films with native settings on Las Cases, Pedro de Gante and other great figures of colonial times add up to a rather charming if rambling narrative. The author, who prepared these educational movies for the "Catholic Film and Radio Guild," was tremendously impressed, among other things, by the gentle qualities of the Indians of Chamula, whose daily existence she believes to be much as it was before the Spanish conquest.

Saint Elizabeth. Anne Seesholtz. Philosophical. $2.75.

A RATHER engagingly simple, and often conjectural, life of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, "Her Brother's Keeper," which devotes much attention to her times. Curiously, the publisher's blurb refers to her as "one of the few [*sic*] distinguished women of the thirteenth century." E. S. S.

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